



BALLISTIC FAKES

DISINFORMATION AND FACT-CHECKING EFFORTS DURING THE ISRAEL-IRAN WAR

NITSAN YASUR, Yael Ram and Edan Ring

SEPTEMBER 2025



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The Israel Internet Association (ISOC-IL) is a non-profit organization that has been operating since the early 1990s to promote the use of the internet for the benefit of the public in Israel. It operates critical internet infrastructure in Israel: the national domain name registries “.il” and “.ישראל”, and the Israel Internet Exchange (IIX). ISOC-IL’s professional knowledge and experience in research, development, and operation of internet technologies for the Israeli public serve as the foundation for research, policy activity, and community empowerment carried out by ISOC-IL. This includes the operation of the Internet Safety Hotline and the Block.org.il initiative, both of which provide the general public with assistance, knowledge, and tools for improving online safety and security; various initiatives and activities aimed at reducing digital gaps and promoting internet skills and literacy in Israeli society; the data.isoc.org.il initiative, which collects and makes accessible quantitative-statistical data about the Israeli internet and its users; and the publication of professional policy research intended to inform and improve the Israeli and global internet arenas at the various intersections of law and technology.

Disinformation Resilience Israel (DRI) Project

This publication is part of the “Developing a Comprehensive Response to Online Misinformation and Disinformation in Israel” (DRI) project, led by the Israel Internet Association (ISOC-IL) with support from the European Union. The project aims to strengthen the resilience of Israeli society to counter misinformation and disinformation by enhancing the fact-finding capacity of media and civil society organizations, raising public awareness and media literacy, and advancing research. It engages journalists, educators, tech entrepreneurs, activists, and the broader public to foster a more informed, critical, and inclusive information ecosystem.

Research and report writing: **Nitsan Yasur, Yael Ram, Edan Ring**

Data analysis: **Dr. Ofir Stegman**

Research assistant: **Nadav Prager**

Assistance in data collection: **Gil Feldman, Inbar Yasur, and the Scooper staff**

Editing (Hebrew): **Havatzelet Shapira**

Translation: **R. Hochman**

Design: **Studio Lee & Tamar**



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Executive Summary

The Israel-Iran War of June 2025 sparked an unprecedented wave of disinformation and manipulated content on social media and in the digital arena. Video clips and images were decontextualized, and AI-generated content and fake arguments were disseminated with the intention of shifting public opinion on the conflict and its outcomes. The current study examines the digital information environment during this conflict from the perspective of global and Israeli fact-checking organizations. Analyzing 592 fact-checks performed and published by 50 organizations in 17 languages, the current study offers a snapshot of the fact-checking environment and a sampled mapping of the digital information environment during and about the war, with emphasis on trends and leading themes in the distribution of false content. The study also examines the fact-checking environment in Israel in this period, and reveals not only its importance but also its limited size, mismatch with various minority groups in Israel society, and lack of representation in and engagement with the global fact-checking environment.

An analysis of the operations of the fact-checking organizations demonstrates the extensive work performed worldwide on content related to the war and underscores its global nature and relevance. The analysis also highlights the extensive involvement of actors from the global south in efforts to refute false claims during the war. Of the 50 organizations examined here, the organizations from India and Jordan conducted a considerable share of the war-related fact-checks that were published in multiple languages and platforms worldwide. This finding undermines the tendency to focus on the Western Anglo fact-checking arena and points to the potential role and significance of additional actors in this field. The analysis found no consistent political biases in the selection of content checked by the fact-checking organizations. The majority of these organizations — irrespective of their country of operation or language, and irrespective of the party that might gain from the spread of the manipulated content — focused on viral content and applied objective, transparent criteria in their fact-checks. Still, the Israeli fact-checking organizations focused extensively on disinformation that might support the Israeli narrative and engaged the Israeli audience, which attests to these organizations' key role as important critics and gatekeepers in the Israeli information environment.

An analysis of the deceptive and manipulated content checked by various

organizations shows that the vast majority of false information that was distributed during the conflict was visual information, mainly in video format. The most common type of manipulation was decontextualization of time, place, or framing. In other words, most of the false and inaccurate content was based on genuine events that were taken out of context rather than on information that was completely fabricated. One fifth (20%) of the checked content incorporated AI-generated synthetic content. This is a rather high proportion, especially in comparison to content manipulated through other means, but it attests to the relatively limited scope of use of these tools during military conflicts compared to the discourse on such content in the media in general.

An especially important finding points to the narratives and themes that disinformation creators and distributors wish to promote and the impact they wish to achieve. The study shows that the use of misinformation during the Israel–Iran War was primarily designed to convey power and present each side's superiority over its adversary, in contrast to other conflicts, such as the Israel–Gaza War, in which disinformation was also widely used to portray the parties as victims of the immoral and illegal actions by their rival. In the Israel–Iran War, the main themes of the disinformation included the displays of military force, physical damage, explosions, and images of civil panic among the enemy. The majority of the examined deceptive content potentially served Iranian interests, but content that potentially supports the Israeli narrative was also disseminated.

The current findings contribute to our understanding of the global and Israeli fact-checking field, against the backdrop of the growing weakness of fact-checking organizations that face continuous challenges and pressure. The findings offer insights into the structure of the field, its actors, and the geographic features of their operations, and reveal the main trends in the dissemination of disinformation during the war: the types, modes of use, and aims of the wartime disinformation. These findings may serve as a foundation for expanding knowledge and developing practical tools for the research field, the media, and the general public, including tools for identifying decontextualized images and clips and AI-generated content, and tools for online information search and verification.

Introduction

The Israel-Iran War, which erupted on June 13, 2025, included intense barrages of aerial and ballistic fire by both combatants for 12 consecutive days. During this period, unprecedented amounts of disinformation were disseminated, in which online psyops and influence campaigns played an active role.¹ Over the entire 12-day period, social media in Israel, Iran, and worldwide were inundated with false or manipulative information about the war, its aims, and the outcomes on the ground. Images and clips, either AI-generated or taken from other conflicts and times and decontextualized, were spread, purporting to constitute documentation of the current conflict, in order to sow fear and confusion and enhance narratives that serve the interests of a specific party. Within hours of the beginning of the war, social media featured fake images of Israeli fighter jets downed in Iran, destroyed airports and apartment buildings in Tel Aviv, enormous explosions in Teheran, and Iranian citizens protesting against their government. These images became viral on social media, and millions of individuals around the world viewed and shared them.² In this wave of contradictory information and public uproar, traditional media and news channels also were found to broadcast and disseminate false information, and orders issued by both governments to refrain from sharing images and information on destruction or attacks, alongside the restricted access to the internet in Iran throughout the war, made it even more difficult to verify war-related claims.

1. Myers, S. L., Odenheimer, N., & Solomon, E. (2025, July 15). Israel and Iran usher in new era of psychological warfare. *The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/2025/07/15/technology/israel-iran-psychological-warfare.html

2. Jones, G. M. (2025, June 19). How out-of-context videos mislead social media users on the Israel-Iran conflict. *Euronews*. www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/06/19/how-out-of-context-videos-mislead-social-media-users-on-the-israel-iran-conflict; EDMO. (2025, June 13). The first AI war: How the Iran-Israel conflict became a battlefield for generative misinformation. *EDMO*. <https://edmo.eu/publications/the-first-ai-war-how-the-iran-israel-conflict-became-a-battlefield-for-generative-misinformation/>; Murphy, M., Robinson, O., & Sardarizadeh, S. (2025, June 19). Israel-Iran conflict and AI disinformation: Dozens of AI-generated videos garner over 100 million views. *BBC News*. www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0k78715enxo

This war joins other international military conflicts in recent years — including the Russia-Ukraine War, and the war between Israel and Hamas following the October 7 attacks in 2023 — in which digital media and influence campaigns played a major role. Conflicts of this type constitute a breeding ground for the dissemination of deceptive information and false narratives, sometimes as part of mutual influence campaigns, as part of various actors' efforts to influence local and global public opinion and affect national policies. Foreign efforts to influence public opinion and policy through online means have become an integral part of contemporary warfare, as seen by the efforts of Israel and Iran to penetrate and disrupt each other's networks even before the armed conflict began.³

Furthermore, the inundation of information and the demand for live immediate updates during conflicts motivate citizens to use unmediated instant messaging platforms and view live broadcasts on them, such as news channels and live updates on Telegram, where users are exposed, at an especially high rate, to unchecked or unverified information and occasionally to fabricated and incorrect information. Moreover, the rapid technological advances in the field of AI in the past year facilitate the creation of convincing falsified visual content, which accelerates its spread and undermines professionals' ability to check facts and verify information before it has been distributed and assimilated and public opinion has been swayed.⁴ Such a dynamic and tumultuous information environment creates new, unfamiliar trends and poses enormous challenges for fact-checking organizations.

3. Yasur, N., & Citrinowicz, D. (2024). Iranian foreign information manipulation and interference during the Swords of Iron War. *INSS*. www.inss.org.il/publication/iran-influence/; Shah, N. (2025, July 30). What the Israel-Iran conflict revealed about wartime cyber operations. *Atlantic Council*. www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/what-the-israel-iran-conflict-revealed-about-wartime-cyber-operations/

4. Ponce de León, E., & Chenrose, A. (2025, June 24). Grok struggles with fact-checking amid Israel-Iran war. *DFRLab*. <https://dfrlab.org/2025/06/24/grok-struggles-with-fact-checking-amid-israel-iran-war/>. Wiener, A., & Stegman, O. (2024). Social media and digital platforms use in Israel (2023–2024). *Israel Internet Association*. <https://en.isoc.org.il/data-and-statistics/social-media-and-digital-platforms-use-in-israel-2023-2024>

Israel is one of the world's leaders in social media use, with high penetration rates in multiple platforms.⁵ Use of Telegram has increased since October 7, and even more intensely since the outbreak of the Israel–Iran War. Users join channels that provide updates and reports that satisfy their need for immediate information, although this information is sometimes unverified and even false.⁶ In addition, domestic and regional tensions in recent years have greatly increased Israeli citizens' vulnerability to influence campaigns. However, despite this vulnerability and the extensive exposure to unverified online information, the fact-checking landscape in Israel is limited and education for media literacy is scarce: A small number of fact-checking organizations exist, their work does not cover the various groups that comprise Israeli society, and increasing financial and political pressure limits their activities.⁷

Recognizing the tension between dissemination of disinformation surrounding international conflicts and the growing weakness of fact-checking organizations around the world and in Israel, the current study examines the ongoing efforts of the global and local fact-checking field in the context of the Israel–Iran War, and through this examination offers a snapshot of the features of deceptive and false information that was disseminated during the war and the role that it played in it.

5. Wiener, A., & Stegman, O. (2024). *Social media and digital platforms use in Israel (2023–2024)*. Israel Internet Association. <https://en.isoc.org.il/data-and-statistics/social-media-and-digital-platforms-use-in-israel-2023-2024>

6. Ring, E. (2025, July 6). Fake news, real missiles: Israel's Telegram crisis is a national security threat. *Haaretz*. www.haaretz.com/opinion/2025-07-06/ty-article-opinion/.premium/fake-news-real-missiles-israels-telegram-crisis-is-a-national-security-threat/00000197-cffc-da1d-a5ff-ef6e780000

7. Ram, Y., Wiener, A., & Ring, E. (2025, April). *Disinformation resilience: Israel stakeholder analysis report*. Israel Internet Association. www.isoc.org.il/files/docs/disinformation/Disinformation-Resilience-Israel-Stakeholder-Analysis-Report-April2025.pdf

Aim of the Study

The current study is based on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of several hundred fact-checks performed by several tens of professional global and Israeli fact-checking organizations during the Israel–Iran War. The aim of this study is to examine and map the global and Israeli fact-checking fields surrounding the war, in order to identify the features and nature of the deceptive information that was disseminated and checked during the war, and to learn about the policies, priorities, and biases of fact-checking organizations in Israel and globally. The emphasis placed on fact-checking organizations in Israel stems from the findings of a previous comprehensive mapping of the Israeli information environment, which revealed considerable deficits in the local fact-checking field, including an insufficient number of Israeli fact-checking organizations that operate in the international arena, and a paucity of organizations that target minority groups in Israel, such as Arab society.⁸

This study offers three main contributions. First, it maps the global fact-checking environment and its treatment of military conflicts in the Middle East, and identifies trends that are related to disinformation spread and fact-checking of such content. By doing so, this study facilitates the identification of fact-checking organizations' weaknesses and obstacles, such as language barriers and lack of use of advanced tools. The study also illustrates how fact-checkers make their findings available in order to increase public trust in their publications, and how they establish their claims in a transparent, accessible manner. Second, the comparison between the Israeli and the global fact-checking environment provides interesting insights on their similarities and differences, including biases in favor of specific issues or limited access to information, which affect the fact-checking process, and reliance (or non-reliance) on official institutions to verify information. Finally, the findings of this study may contribute to the development of knowledge resources and competencies for research, the media, and the general public in Israel, including increased familiarity with available tools to identify decontextualized images and clips, AI-generated materials, online information searches and other practices.

8. Ram et al., 2025.

Methodology

Dataset and Data Collection

To examine how the local and global fact-checking environment addressed the flood of misinformation on the Israel–Iran War, we collected and analyzed several hundred fact-checks performed by several dozen organizations between June 13 and June 24, 2025 — from the beginning of the war to the ceasefire.

An analysis of the fact-checking work in and outside Israel was based on two primary sources. The first is Google’s [Fact Check Explorer](#) database, which contains fact-checks on behalf of organizations worldwide, including independent fact-checking organizations and news organizations, many of which are members of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) and consequently meet professional standards.⁹ We searched this database using the search words “Israel” and “Iran” in 17 languages, including English, Hebrew, Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Russian, and Chinese. The search generated 537 results. Notably, the database contains only those organizations that integrated [ClaimReview markup](#), a data structure that allows Google tools to retrieve data from them and present it in Google’s database, which allows the data to be searched and the results to be sorted. In Israel, only one fact-checking organization uses (or at least used in the past) this Google tool — Globe’s [Hamashrokit](#) [the Whistle] — but the current study did not find any fact-checks performed on behalf of this organization.¹⁰

9. See Appendix B for a list of fact-checking organizations included in the current study and their membership status in IFCN. The appendix and supplementary materials are available at: www.isoc.org.il/files/docs/Appendix-Israel-Iran-Disinformation-he.xlsx

10. A manual review of Hamashrokit’s activities found that this organization posted seven items in the relevant period, of which only two addressed disinformation related to the war. However, these two posts did not strictly constitute fact-checking work and rather appeared in news items, and were also based on other fact-checking organizations. Therefore, these data were not included in the current study.

As Google’s database does not include Israeli fact-checks, and in view of our desire to examine the local fact-checking environment during the war, we also extracted relevant content from two leading fact-checking organizations in Israel: [FakeReporter](#) and the [Bodkim](#) Project. As these organizations are mainly active on X, we used the assistance of [Scoopier](#) (an Israeli company that provides social media monitoring services) to extract all the tweets from these organizations’ X accounts in the relevant period. A total of 192 posts were found. Since the data posted by Israeli fact-checking organizations was extracted in a planned and focused manner, throughout our study, we distinguished between the analysis of global fact-checking (collected through Google tools) and the fact-checking data at the local level, based on an analysis of the posts of the two aforementioned Israeli organizations.

After data extraction was completed, we eliminated fact-checks that did not concern the current Israel–Iran War, such as fact-checks related to other conflicts involving Israel or local political issues that were not directly related to the war. Retweets and retweet chains were also eliminated. Furthermore, fact-checks that addressed multiple content items or cases were split and each was counted separately. The final database comprised 592 fact-checks (534 global fact-checks and 58 Israeli fact-checks) that were analyzed and coded.

Coding

After completing the data collection, all the fact-checks were coded (see Appendix A for coding definitions and instructions). An independent outside coder who was not a member of the research team coded the data according to instructions and definitions that were determined in advance, independently of the fact-checking results. The research team performed a sample review of the coding to ensure consistency.

Coding included meta-data such as the date, language, name, and country of origin of the fact-checking organization, and data and categories related to the contents of the check.

First, the type of deception/disinformation was coded,¹¹ in line with leading research in the field and generally accepted definitions of false information:¹²

- The fact-check determined that the content was generated using AI
- The fact-check determined that the content was manipulated without the use of AI, e.g., biased editing (Manipulated)
- The fact-check determined that the content includes someone posing as another individual or organization (Imposter)
- The fact-check determined that the presented argument was completely false (Fabricated)
- The fact-check determined that at least one of the following aspects of the content was decontextualized (Out of Context):
 - **Out of Date** – The event occurred at a different time than alleged
 - **Out of Place** – The event occurred at a different place than alleged. Both the original location and the alleged location of the event were coded if the check included this information
 - **False Connection** – The content includes correct facts that were presented in a false context. The check found that the content is true but was presented in a context that creates a meaning that is different from or opposite to the original meaning, even if the noted place and time are accurate.

Furthermore, the format of the checked content was coded (text, image, video) and whether the fact-check addressed content that was originally published in an official media channel or on social media. In addition, an effort was made to assess the underlying motivation for creating and distributing the misinformation. To this end, we coded the party that potentially gains from the publication of the false content (Iran, Israel,

11. A single fact-check may refer to several types of disinformation or deception.

12. Hameleers (2025). The visual nature of information warfare: The construction of partisan claims on truth and evidence in the context of wars in Ukraine and Israel/Palestine. *Journal of Communication*, 75(2), 90–100. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqae045>; EU DisinfoLab Research Team. (2022, July 22). *EU DisinfoLab's methodology to classify fact-checked disinformation: A codebook*. EU DisinfoLab. www.disinfo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/20220720_Methodology_FINAL-1.pdf; Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017, September). *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making*. Council of Europe. <https://edoc.coe.int/en/media/7495-information-disorder-toward-an-interdisciplinary-framework-for-research-and-policy-making.html>

neither, or difficult to determine). Although this coding stage involves some degree of interpretation and does not stem from the fact-checks themselves, we believe that information about the motives and aims of parties that created and distributed the war-related disinformation is important and interesting. This information may also offer an overview of the proportion of content found to be false with respect to each of the parties to the conflict. Finally, we also marked the main themes identified in each fact-check — the main topics that emerged and recurred in the disinformation disseminated surrounding the war.

Findings

A. Global Fact-Checking during the Israel–Iran War

This section presents the findings of the analysis of several hundred publications (N=534) that address false information and disinformation distributed in June 2025 during the Israel–Iran War, based on Google’s Fact-Check Explorer database and were checked by fact-checking organizations around the world. The findings include information on both the fact-checking organizations and the checked content.

1. Mapping the Global Fact-Checking Organizations Environment

1.1. Origin and Identity

The database of the current study included fact-checked performed by 47 fact-checking organizations from around the world that checked war-related claims and items.¹³ Table 1 presents the list of organizations that published more than 10 fact-checks on claims and items related to the war in the study period, and their country of registration.

The organization that published the largest number of war-related fact-checks is Misbar (مِيسْبَار), a fact-checking organization whose main offices are located in Jordan, with 134 fact-checks. Next is AFP, an international fact-checking organization that publishes in various languages, with main offices in France and numerous offices worldwide. AFP published 64 fact-checks. AFP is followed by Newtral (Spain), Newschecker (India), BOOM (India), Teyit (Turkey), and FACTLY (India) with 31, 30, 24, 23, and 22 fact-checks, respectively.

13. The two Israeli fact-checking organizations (FakeReporter and Bodkim, with 38 and 20 fact-checks, respectively) were not included in this chapter on analysis due to their different source (see Methodology section). See Appendix B for a complete list of the organizations included in the current study.

Fact-checking organization	No. of fact-checks	% of all fact-checks in the study
Misbar (Jordan)	134	25%
AFP (France – International) ¹⁴	64	12%
Newtral (Spain)	31	6%
Newschecker (India)	30	6%
BOOM Fact Check (India)	24	4%
Teyit (Turkey)	23	4%
FACTLY (India)	22	4%
Alt News (India)	19	4%
The Quint (India)	18	3%
Factnameh (Canada)	18	3%
Doğruluk Payı (Turkey)	13	2%
Lead Stories (USA)	10	2%
Snopes (USA)	10	2%

Table 1. Fact-Checks by Organization

The study included fact-checks performed by organizations in 23 countries, mostly in Europe and Asia. Examining the number of fact-checks by country, the majority of the fact-checks included in the current study were performed by fact-checking organizations in Jordan and India. In India, the fact-checks were performed by nine different organizations, while in Jordan the majority of the fact-checks were performed by Misbar — the organization that also published the largest number of fact-checks of all the organizations included in the current study.

14. Since AFP is an agency that contains several fact-checking organizations, we classified all the fact-checks performed by AFP offices around the world under AFP (see Appendix B).

Country of registration	No. of fact-checking organizations	No. of published fact-checks
India	8	136
Jordan	3	136
France (international)	7	64
Turkey	2	36
Spain	2	35
US	3	21
Canada	1	18
Brazil	3	12
Australia	1	9
Yemen	1	9
Philippines	2	8
Mexico	1	8
Estonia	1	7
Germany	2	6
Egypt	1	6
Poland	1	6
UK	1	5
France	2	4
Columbia	1	3
Portugal	1	2
Greece	1	1
Japan	1	1
Sri Lanka	1	1

Table 2. Fact-Checks by Country of Registration

1.2. Fact-checking Languages

The fact-checks included in the current study were published in many different languages. Several organizations published their fact-checks in multiple languages concurrently, based on their aims and target audiences, and not only in the official language of their country of operation. Indian organizations, for example, typically publish their fact-checks in English. The

fact-checks included in the current study were published in 14 languages: The majority of the fact-checks were published in English (198 fact-checks or 37% of all fact-checks), followed by Arabic (131 fact-checks or 25% of all fact-checks) and Spanish (54 fact-checks or 10% of all fact-checks). Fact-checks were also published in Turkish, Hindi, Portuguese, Farsi, and French.

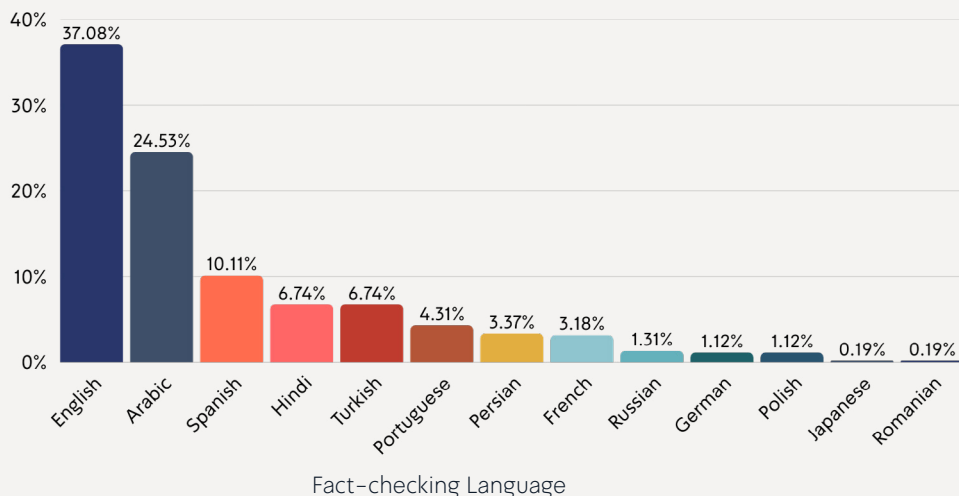


Figure 1. Fact-Checks by Language of Publication

2. Analysis of the Fact-Checks

This section presents the findings of the analysis of the content examined by the fact-checking organizations. It is important to stress that the current study is limited to an examination of the fact-checks published with respect to misinformation related to the war, and the study does not purport to analyze all the false war-related content that was disseminated. Nonetheless, the underlying assumption of this study is that an examination of the fact-checks published during the war by several dozen leading international fact-checking organizations, based in a range of countries and publishing in a range of languages, offers a representative picture of the disinformation environment concerning the war at that moment, and offers insights into the main trends in the dissemination of disinformation and false content in armed state conflicts.

2.1. Content Format

An analysis of the format of the content examined by the fact-checking organizations indicates that the vast majority of the content (84%) was video clips. Images and texts comprised 13% and 3% of the fact-checked content. Therefore, the majority of the false content that was checked during the war by leading fact-checking organizations was in a visual format.

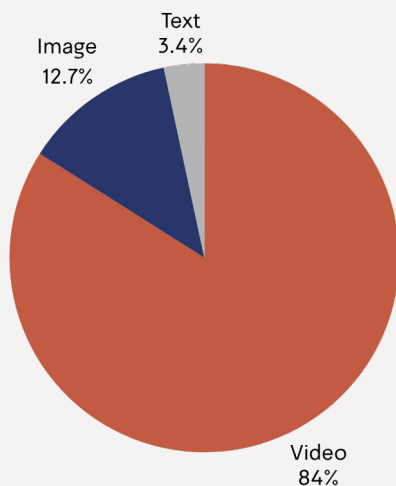


Figure 2. Format of Fact-Checked Content

2.2. Main Types of Disinformation During the Israel-Iran War

This section focuses on a classification of the type of manipulation, deception, or fabrication found in the false content that was fact-checked during the war. We used the seven main categories of disinformation, pursuant to leading research in the field:¹⁵ out of date, out of place, false connection, AI-generated, fabricated arguments, manipulated content, and imposter content.¹⁶

15. Hameleers, 2025; EU DisinfoLab Research Team, 2022; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017.

16. A single fact-check may refer to several types of disinformation. See Appendix A for the criteria for coding each type.

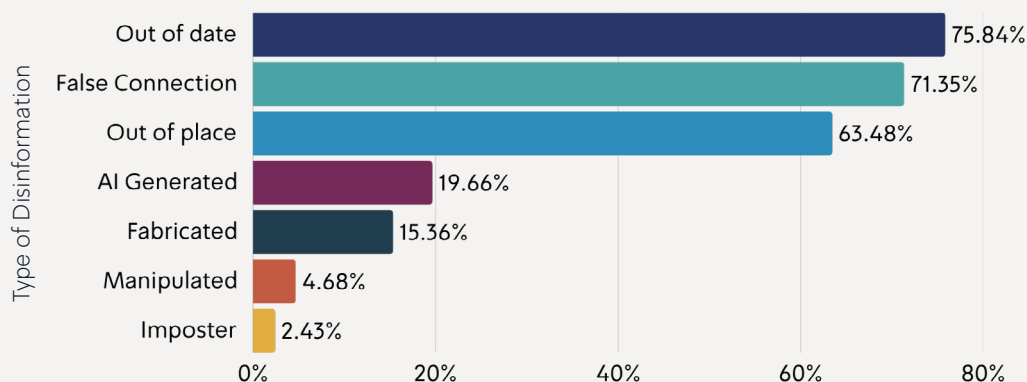


Figure 3. Disinformation by Type

An analysis of the disinformation types included in the examined fact-checks by type indicates that the majority of checked content (76%) was classified as out of date. In these cases, the fact-checks found that the event in question did not occur or was not published on the claimed date. For example, many items that were published during the war actually occurred during the previous conflict between Israel and Iran in 2024.



Image 1. Old clips of Iranian missile attacks on Israel.¹⁷

17. Mahalanobish, A. (2025, June 18). More old videos of missile strikes viral as Iran's June attack on Israel. Alt News. www.altnews.in/more-old-videos-of-missile-strikes-viral-as-irans-june-attack-on-israel/

A large proportion of the fact-checks (71%) concerned false connections and decontextualized content. In these items, genuine content is presented with false contextual information, which creates a meaning that differs from or is opposite to the original meaning. For example, one checked item concerned a demonstration in the US that actually occurred during the war at the stated place, but the demonstration was framed with false contextual information: The item claimed that the demonstration was related to the war, although it was actually regarding an entirely different issue.

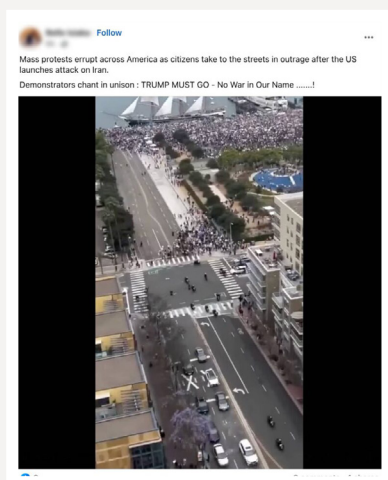


Image 2. Clip of a demonstration in San Diego (USA) from the “No Kings” protests against Trump and his government policy, which was later misrepresented as Americans protesting against the U.S. attack on Iran.¹⁸

Next, more than one half (63%) of the fact-checked items were presented out of place, that is, the fact-check found that the documented event had occurred in a different location than claimed. For example, claims of Iranian missiles hitting Israel were accompanied by clips or images that had been captured in other locations, including China and Lebanon.

18. Appani, A. K. (2025, June). A video of San Diego’s “No Kings” march is being shared as footage of Americans protesting against the US attack on Iran. *Factly*. <https://factly.in/a-video-of-san-diegos-no-kings-march-is-being-shared-as-footage-of-americans-protesting-against-the-us-attack-on-iran/>

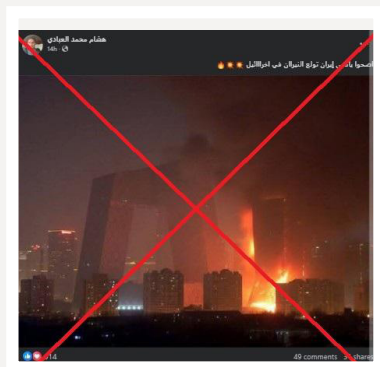


Image 3. This is not an image of fires caused by the impact of Iranian missiles in Israel, but of a fire that occurred in 2009 in a hotel in China.¹⁹



Image 4. Clip of Israeli bombing of Lebanon, and not Iranian bombing of a military installation in Israel.²⁰

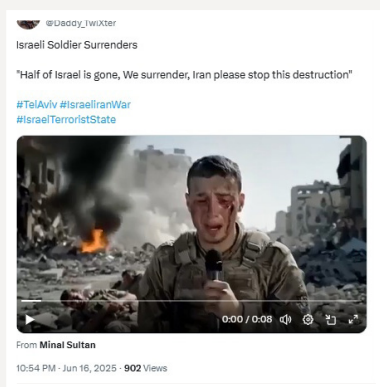


Image 5. AI-generated clip showing an Israeli soldier surrendering and begging Iran for mercy.²¹

19. Arabic News Health Investigation Service (2025, June 25). هذه الصورة ليست لحريق في إسرائيل نتيجة الصواريخ. [This picture is not of a fire in Israel as a result of Iranian missiles, but of a fire in a hotel in China in 2009]. AFP. <https://factcheckarabic.afp.com/doc.afp.com.62ZH7KD>

20. Misbar Editorial Team (2025). فيديو قديم من لبنان وليس لقصف إيراني على مبنى للمخابرات. [An old video from Lebanon, not of an Iranian strike on an Israeli intelligence building]. www.misbar.com/factcheck/2025/06/16/الاسرائيلية-على-مبنى-للمخابرات-الاسرائيلية

21. Madhusoodan, K. (2025, June 20). Viral video claiming to show Israeli soldier begging Iran for mercy is AI-generated. Newschecker. www.newschecker.in/undefined/ai-deepfake/viral-video-claiming-to-show-israeli-soldier-begging-iran-for-mercy-is-a-deepfake



Image 6. Refuting the false claim that the US infiltrated Indian airspace on its route to its attack against Iran.²²

In addition to genuine content taken out of place or date or presented with a false connection, the analysis reveals that 20% of the checked content was generated using Generative AI tools — mainly fabricated clips and images. For example, images and clips showing destroyed buildings and infrastructure in Israel or downing Israeli jets, a clip showing an Israeli soldier surrendering and begging for the end of the war, or clips of Israeli anti-war demonstrations.

A further 15% of the fact-checked items were identified as fabricated claims — events, actions, or quotes that were entirely fabricated. These fabricated claims included alleged reports of Israeli aircraft crashing in Iran, Israeli pilots captured as prisoners of war, and nuclear attacks (by Israel and by Iran). Indian fact-checking organizations, for example, were extensively engaged in refuting the claim that the US had penetrated India's airspace on route to an attack against Iran.



Image 7. Fabricated item of a nuclear attack against Iran, published on X.²³

22. Chowdhury, A. (2025, June 24). No, US bombers did not use Indian airspace to attack Iran. *BOOM*. www.boomlive.in/fact-check/us-airstrikes-iran-indian-airspace-claim-fact-check-28864

23. Duke, A. (2025, June 22). Fact-check: Video does NOT show lightning bolt during US bombing of Iran nuclear facility. *Lead Stories*. <https://leadstories.com/hoax-alert/2025/06/fact-check-video-does-not-show-lightning-bolt-during-us-bombing-of-iran-nuclear-facility.html>

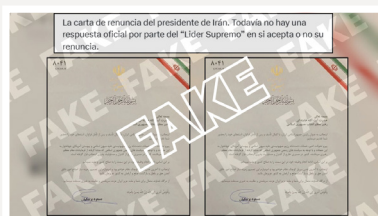


Image 8. Fake letter of resignation of the President of Iran.²⁴

Finally, 2% of the fact-checked content included imposter content — featuring an imposter of some official or qualified entity. The fact-check found that the content was presented by (or attributed to) an imposter or included a fake declaration by an imposter. Examples of imposter content include an alleged report that the President of Iran had resigned, with an image of a fake letter of resignation, or a deepfake clip in which Russian President Putin declares that Russia supports Iran — such a declaration was never made.

In summary, the current analysis shows that the majority of items were decontextualized — taken out of place, out of date, or presented with a false connection and this group is significantly larger than the fact-checks that identified AI-generated fakes and fabricated items. Only a few fact-checks identified manipulated content (not manipulated by AI) or imposter content. That is, the vast majority of deceptive content that was checked did not include pure fabrications but rather was based on genuine events whose facts were embellished or distorted.

It is important to stress that fabricated content and deceptive or manipulated information may involve several types of disinformation or misinformation simultaneously. We therefore examined the overlap between the types of disinformation. As expected, we found a large overlap among the decontextualized content. We also found significant overlap between content taken out of place and AI-generated content, and between fabricated content and decontextualized content.

A breakdown of disinformation formats indicates that the majority of video

24. Pérez, S. (2025, June 23). El presidente de Irán no ha presentado su dimisión a 23 de junio de 2025, la carta viral es falsa [The president of Iran has not submitted his resignation as of June 23, 2025; the viral letter is fake]. *Newtral*. www.newtral.es/carta-renuncia-presidente-iran/20250623/

clips were identified as decontextualized content – taken out of place (68%), out of date (82%), or presented with a false connection (77%), and a minority were AI-generated (17%) or fabricated (12%). Interestingly, AI was used in 41% of the images. The majority of textual content included fabricated claims (56%) and a smaller proportion of imposter content (17%).

	AI-generated content	Manipulated content	Imposter content	Out of date	Out of place	False connection or false context	Fabricated claims
Text	6%	11%	17%	6%	6%	6%	56%
Video	17%	4%	2%	82%	68%	77%	12%
Image	41%	9%	6%	47%	46%	46%	32%

Table 3. Distribution of Format by Type of Disinformation

2.3. Main Themes

The coders identified the main themes in each fact-checked item. Coding was performed with the aim of identifying trends, patterns, or recurrent narratives in the disinformation related to the war. After coding of all fact-checks was completed, eight main themes emerged: physical damage (mainly to building and infrastructure), explosions, displays of military power, civil panic, public protests, political issues, aircraft crashes or interceptions, and assassinations of senior officials or spies.²⁵

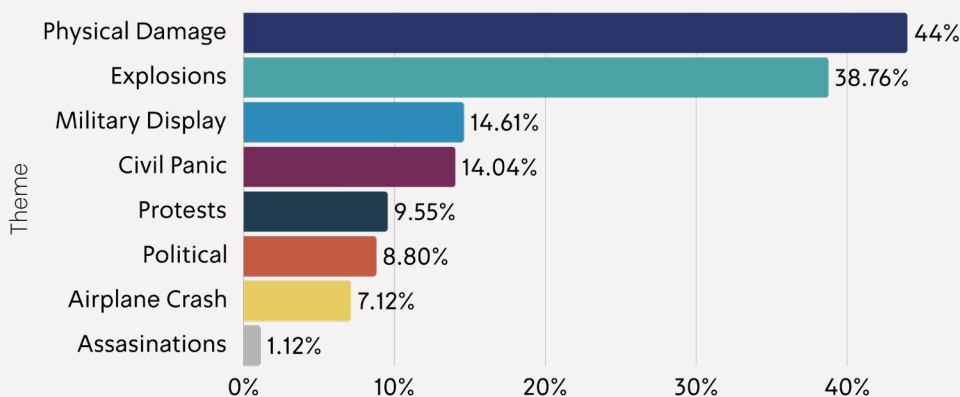


Figure 4. Main themes identified in the fact-checked disinformation content

25. Multiple themes could be identified in each fact-check. Therefore, the count of the themes exceeds the total number of fact-checks included in the current study.

The most prevalent theme in the fact-checked content was physical damage to buildings or infrastructure (this theme appeared in 44% of the fact-checks). Such false content included, for example, alleged destruction to Azrieli Towers in Tel Aviv by Iranian missiles or to an airport in Teheran caused by Israeli attacks. Disinformation of this type was designed to falsely exaggerate the scope of destruction caused in the war. A second prevalent theme concerned explosions in various sites (39%). These items, which included images and video clips of fire, smoke, and explosions at the moment of impact, supposedly caused by one of the combatants, were frequently decontextualized. One example is a series of false reports of attacks on the nuclear site at Fordow or an explosion in Haifa Bay. The content associated with this theme was disseminated to arouse fear and uncertainty regarding the occurrence of explosions or attacks, and to create a sense of chaos during the war. Another theme, which appeared less frequently, concerned displays of military force (15%). These items were designed to cause panic and deterrence, and included, for example, a presentation of a stock of Israeli bombs or trucks loaded with missiles on route to be launched against Israel.



Image 9. Video clip showing an alleged Iranian attack on the oil refinery in Haifa, but the source of this image is a fire-fighting drill conducted in 2015 in China.²⁶

26. Moubayed, E. (2025, June 18). Video does not show Iranian attack on Bazan oil refinery in Haifa. *Misbar*. www.misbar.com/en/factcheck/2025/06/18/video-does-not-show-iranian-attack-bazan-oil-refinery-haifa

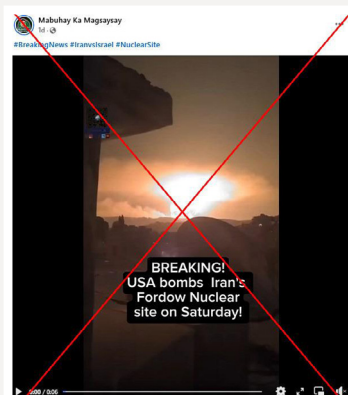


Image 10. Old clip allegedly showing a US attack on Iran.²⁷

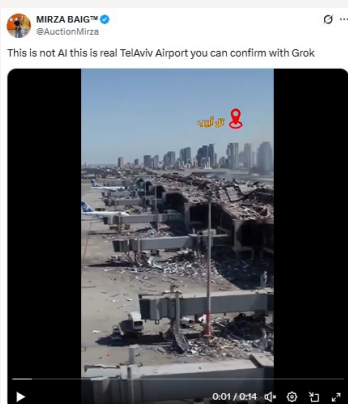


Image 11. Viral AI-generated video clip allegedly showing damaged caused in Ben Gurion airport by an Iranian attack.²⁸



Image 12. Video allegedly showing an enormous Iranian missile on route to its launching pad against Israel. This clip was posted online in 2018 and shows an industrial silo for a GLP factory on route from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan.²⁹

27. Sodipe, L. (2025, June 26). [Old blast videos falsely depicted as US strikes on Iran]. AFP. <https://factcheck.afp.com/doc.afp.com.63DM9KF>

28. Madhusoodan, K. (2025, June 18). Viral video claiming to show Tel Aviv Airport in ruins after Iran strike found to be AI-generated. Newschecker. <https://newschecker.in/ai-deepfake/viral-video-claiming-to-show-tel-aviv-airport-in-ruins-after-iran-strike-found-to-be-ai-generated>

29. Ibrahim, N. (2025, June 19). [Video is from 2018 and not depicting the transfer of a massive Iranian missile]. Misbar. www.misbar.com/factcheck/2025/06/19/الفيديو-من-عام-2018-وليس-لعملية-نقل-صاروخ-إيراني-ضخم

An additional theme focused on civil panic during the war (14%) and was reflected in images and clips of masses of people fleeing from city centers in response to enemy attacks, and civilian protests in support of or against the local government (10%). The protest theme mainly included images of anti-government protest demonstrations in Iran and demonstrations in support of Israel's attacks, as well as images of demonstrations supporting the government and expressing joy at the attacks against Israel. Although most of these items were posted as events that occurred in Iran, some images allegedly originated in Israel, for example, images of Israeli citizens imploring Iran to stop the war.



Image 13. AI-generated clip of an alleged Israeli demonstration of Israelis apologizing to Iran and demanding that the war end.³⁰

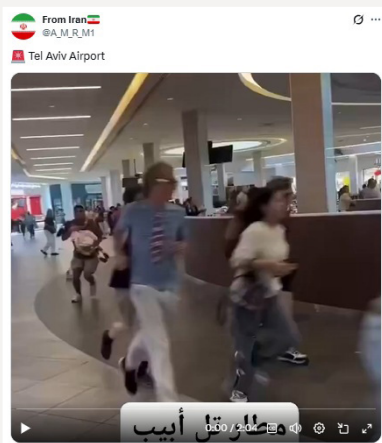


Image 14. An old clip from a terrorist attack in a mall in Florida, presented as documentation of chaos in Ben Gurion Airport.³¹

30. Misbar Editorial Team [2025] [فريق تحرير مسبار] (June 20). *الفيديو نكاذ اصطناعي وليس لإسرائيليين يعتذرون لإيران ويطلبون*. [The video is AI-generated, not of Israelis apologizing to Iran and calling for a ceasefire]. *Misbar*. www.misbar.com/factcheck/2025/06/20/نيبفلا-ءاكد-وعاطصبا-ءاكد-وببفلا

31. 3Madhusoodan, K. (2025, June 19). Old video of stampede at Florida Mall shared as chaos at Tel Aviv airport. *Newschecker*. <https://newschecker.in/fact-check/old-video-of-stampede-at-florida-mall-shared-as-chaos-at-tel-aviv-airport>



Image 15. Video clip from 2018 showing Iranian members of parliament burning an American flag.³²



Image 16. AI-generated image created to claim that Iran downed F-35 Israeli jets in Iranian skies.³³



Image 17. AI-generated image alleging that a US B-2 bomber was intercepted on route to attack the nuclear site at Fordow.³⁴

32. Rappler (2025, June 19). Fact-check: Video of Iran lawmakers burning U.S. flag inside parliament is from 2018. www.rappler.com/newsbreak/fact-check/video-iran-lawmakers-burning-us-flag-2018-not-recent/

33. Jo, H. (2025, June 26). AI image of crashed jet falsely linked to Iran-Israel war. AFP. <https://factcheck.afp.com/doc.afp.com.62Y23VWD>

34. Castroviejo, M. (2025, June 23). Esta imagen de un bombardero estadounidense B-2 supuestamente derribado por Irán está generada con IA [This image of a US B-2 bomber allegedly downed by Iran is AI-generated]. Newtral. www.newtral.es/b-2-derribado-iran-bulo/20250623/

Another theme is political issues (9%). Content reflecting this theme included politicians' threats and warnings, such as President Trump's call to Netanyahu to stop the attacks on Iran. Examples include a video clip allegedly showing Trump announcing that the US should not become involved in the war and an old clip of Iranian parliament members burning a US flag. Another repeated theme focused on aircraft crashes or pilots in captivity (7%). This theme was frequently associated with the claim that Iran managed to cause damage to Israel's air force, but the majority of the visual items that accompanied these claims were AI-generated. Finally, a marginal theme (1%) involved assassinations, including false claims that Netanyahu was killed in an Iranian assassination, or that Mossad agents assassinated senior Iranian officials (unrelated to the confirmed assassination attempts published in the press).

These findings indicate that the majority of the false content distributed with respect to the war focused on physical damage to civilian and military infrastructure and combatants' displays of military force. Another interesting aspect of the various themes is related to efforts to influence public opinion by showing the combatants' support for or opposition to the war, which is reflected in the images that focus on protests and civil panic.

2.4. Motivation for Creating and Distributing Disinformation

We made an effort to gain an understanding of the motivation for creating and disseminating disinformation during the war, although we were aware of the challenge of reaching a clear-cut determination of these motives. For each fact-checked content, we asked which party might gain from its dissemination, and coded the answer. An analysis of motives indicates that in 72% of the cases, the spread of disinformation could have served the Iranian side more, compared to 24% of the false content that could have mainly served the Israel side. In 4% of the cases, it was not possible to attribute a clear motivation to either party.

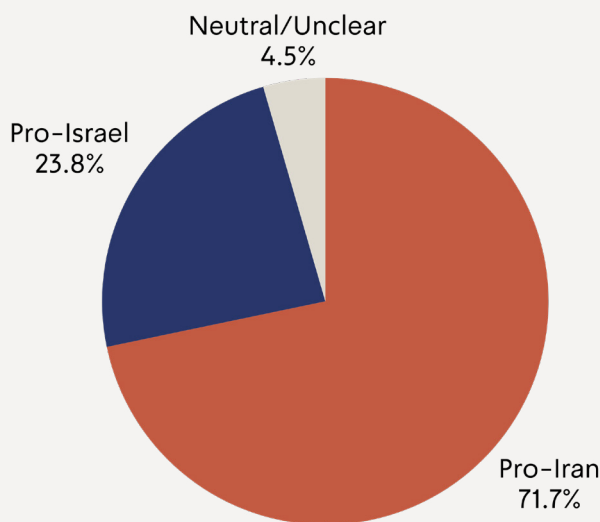


Figure 5. Fact-Checked Content by Motivation for Dissemination

3. Comparative Analysis of Decontextualized and AI-Generated Disinformation

In this section, we expand the discussion on two main types of disinformation that were the most frequently employed according to our analysis: content that decontextualized genuine content, and synthetic content created by AI.

3.1. Disinformation that Includes Decontextualized Information

The analysis shows that in the majority of cases, genuine documentation was taken out of context. Sometimes the genuine content was taken out of context on several levels, including attribution to a different time or location (for example, using a video clip from the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War). In effect, content that was out of place and out of date accounts for close to one-half (48%) of all fact-checked items included in the study. Therefore, out of place, out of date, or false connection items should be considered various expressions of the same phenomenon, or part of a general tactic to

decontextualize information with the intention of deception. The analysis shows that 88% (470) of the fact-checks of war-related content contained at least one decontextualized feature. The current section focuses on all the fact-checks that identified at least one decontextualized element.³⁵

Due to the high percentage of decontextualized items, it is not surprising that the main themes in this category are consistent with the main categories identified in the general analysis. An examination of the main themes indicates that decontextualization typically involved content related to physical damage (49%), explosions (43%), civil panic and displays of military force (14% each), protests (11%), and aircraft crashes and political issues (5%). Only two fact-checks involved content related to assassinations. That is, in the majority of cases, decontextualization served to create deceptions about the physical destruction of buildings and infrastructure and explosions.

For out of place items (362 fact-checks), which presented events from other places around the world as if they had occurred in the Israel–Iran War, we coded the alleged place of occurrence and the actual place of occurrence, if the fact-check contained this information. Table 5 lists the 15 main places of occurrence of the events that are claimed to have occurred in the Israel–Iran War.³⁶ It is interesting to note that out of place content sometimes involved documentation from a place in Israel or Iran but the site was not the alleged site of event. For example, an image of an explosion that occurred in Tel Aviv was claimed to be documentation of an explosion in the oil refineries in Haifa, or an explosion in the nuclear site Bushehr was claimed to be an explosion in a civil port in southern Iran.

35. This section includes contents that were found to be out of place but were not coded as AI-generated. See further in this section for AI-generated out of place contents.

36. This analysis also includes checks of contextomized contents performed by the Israeli fact-checking organizations, which were analyzed separately (Bodkim and FakeReporter). In several cases, disinformation content was disseminated accompanied by different claims, as an event that occurred in Israel or as one that occurred in Iran. In some cases, content was taken out of context and did not occur either in Israel or in Iran. Therefore, the number of real locations may be different than the sum of claims concerning events that occurred in Israel and in Iran.

Actual place of occurrence	Frequency	Alleged location is in Israel (n = 221)	Alleged location is in Iran (n = 131)
China	41	41	0
Israel	27	6	17
US	24	20	6
Russia	17	8	9
Syria	17	1	14
Iran	16	5	8
Computer game	14	0	14
Ukraine	13	12	0
Iraq	13	12	1
Lebanon	12	10	2
Chile	9	0	9
Uzbekistan	8	0	8
Mexico	7	3	4
Georgia	7	7	0
Gaza	6	6	0

Table 5. Actual and Alleged Locations of Out of Place Disinformation

In summary, the analysis of the real locations of the out of place content shows that the most popular source of documentation used in war-related disinformation is China (41 fact-checks), mainly involving explosions and physical damage to buildings and infrastructure. The second most frequently used country is Israel (27 fact-checks), which served mainly as a source of video clips of past attacks that allegedly occurred in the Israel-Iran War, or of damage in one location that allegedly occurred in another location. Finally, video clips and images taken in the US (24) served multiple themes, including protests and civil panic.

3.2. AI-Generated Disinformation

During the war, the international media reported the widespread use of AI tools to create and disseminate disinformation on the events of the war.³⁷ We therefore sought to examine whether this practice was popular and the role that AI-generated fake war-related content played compared to more traditional and familiar forms of manipulating visual content.

This section of the report analyzes content that included AI use and was fact-checked during the war — a total of 105 fact-checks, which constitute 20% of the fact-checks included in the current study. First, we wished to examine the distribution of the content formats that contained AI-generated disinformation. That is, which media formats used AI-generated content to spread disinformation during the war. The analysis indicates that video clips constituted the vast majority of AI-generated war-related content (73%) and images accounted for the remainder (27%). It is interesting to note that video and images (68% and 24% respectively) were also the main formats in disinformation that contained manipulated content that was not AI-generated (approximately 25 publications). These findings are consistent with the overall trend that shows that the vast majority of war-related fact-checked disinformation content used a video format. However, disinformation content, whether AI-generated or not, contained a larger percentage of images compared to the entire sample (in which images comprised only 13% of the fact-checked content).

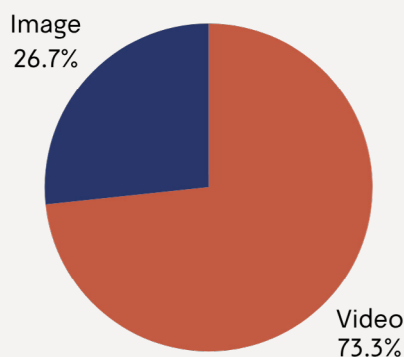


Figure 6. Fact-Checked AI-Generated Disinformation Content by Format

37. EDMO, 2025; Murphy et al., 2025.

A breakdown of the themes identified in AI-generated content indicates that AI was mainly used to create images of physical damage (56%) and explosions (27%), and was used less to generate images related to civil panic (13%), downed aircraft (11%), displays of military force (10%), protests (7%), political issues (4%), and assassinations (2%). This breakdown is similar to the general distribution of themes in the fact-checked items included in the current study, although the theme of physical damage is more prevalent in AI-generated content than in decontextualized content, at the expense of the theme of explosions: 56% of AI-generated content show alleged physical damage compared to 49% of decontextualized content, whereas content describing explosions account for only 27% of AI-generated content compared to 43% of decontextualized content.

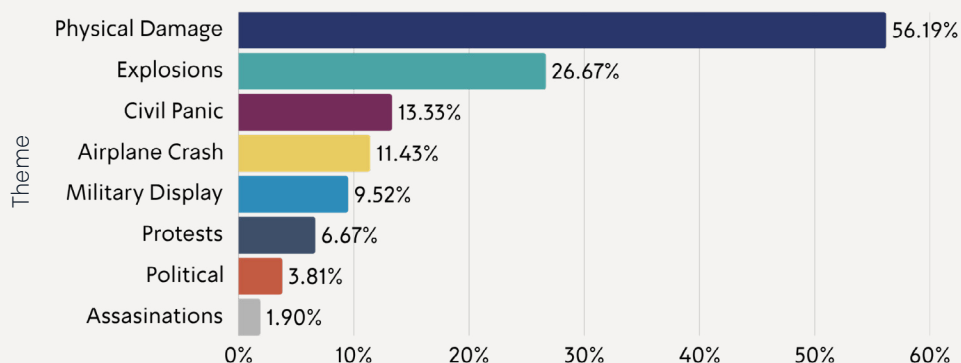


Figure 7. Main Themes of AI-Generated War-Related Disinformation

Furthermore, according to an analysis of the AI-generated fact-checked disinformation that mentioned specific sites, 81% of these items purported to present events in Israel, such as explosions in buildings, compared to only 17% of such items that purported to present events in Iran, such as pro-Israel demonstrations of Iranian citizens or images of missiles before launch.

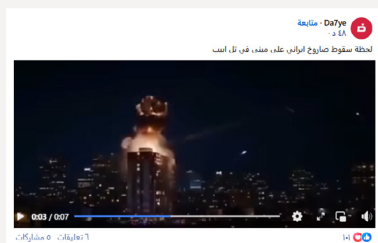


Image 18. AI-generated video clip allegedly showing the collapse of buildings in Israel caused by Iranian missile fire.³⁸

Accordingly, an examination of the motivation for creating and disseminating AI-generated war-related content shows that in 90% of the cases, the dissemination of AI-generated content potentially serves the Iranian side, and in only 10% of the cases might serve Israeli interests. This discrepancy is even larger than the difference in motivation that emerges from an analysis of motivation based on the entire sample, and shows that the majority of AI-generated war-related materials mainly served Iran and its interests.

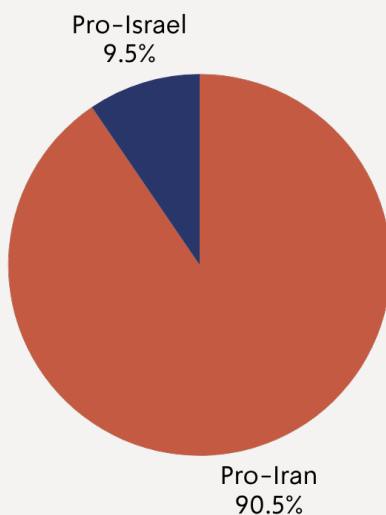


Figure 8. Fact-Checked Content by Motivation for Dissemination

38. Misbar Editorial Team [2025] [فريق تحرير مسبار] June 15]. مشاهدة زائفة وليست لسقوط مبان في إسرائيل نتيجة القصف الإيراني [Fake footage of buildings collapsing in Israel as a result of Iranian bombing]. Misbar. www.misbar.com/factcheck/2025/06/15/مشاهدة-زائفة-وليست-لسقوط-مبان-في-إسرائيل-نتيجة-القصف-الإيراني

We also examined how fact-checking organizations manage to identify and prove fake AI-generated content. A qualitative manual analysis shows that the organizations typically use tools to identify AI-generated content, such as Undetectable AI, Hive Moderation, SightEngine, and WasItAll? The organizations also identify the source of the watermarks that appear on images or clips, which overtly mark the name of the tool used to generate the content. Other methods include identifying the source that disseminated the fabricated content based on the source's own declaration that it was AI-generated or identifying details that should not reasonably appear in genuine content, such as errors in spelling, landscapes, or depiction of body parts.

It is also interesting to note that the majority of the cases in which AI tools were used to generate war-related disinformation included new content (73%), while 27% contained recycled AI-generated disinformation that had been disseminated before the war. This finding emerged from a breakdown of fact-checks that identified content that was originally created using AI, disseminated in the past, and re-disseminated during the Israel-Iran War. The analysis did, however, find that the majority of the content created before the war was created several months or weeks prior to the beginning of the war, and its context was not entirely unrelated to the war.



Figure 19. Images created using AI that allegedly show destruction in the Mossad headquarters. This image was already posted in May 2025, before the war began.³⁹

39. Bhardwaj, S. (2025, June 20). इजरायल में मोसाद हेडक्वार्टर की तबाही के दावे से AI generated विजुअल वायरल [AI generated visuals go viral with claims of destruction of Mossad headquarters in Israel]. BOOM. <https://hindi.boomlive.in/fact-check/iran-israel-conflict-ai-generated-visuals-of-mossad-headquarters-viral-28831>

B. Fact-Checking in Israel During the Israel–Iran War

Due to the absence of Israeli fact-checking organizations in the global arena, and in view of our aim of examining local fact-checking activities during the Israel–Iran War, the current study also includes a targeted analysis of the content checked by the main fact-checking organizations operating in Israel. A total of 58 fact-checks were published by the Israeli fact-checking organizations during the war.

1. The Fact-Checking Field in Israel

A comprehensive mapping of the information environment in Israel indicates that the fact-checking field is both underdeveloped and limited in the number of organizations in operation and the scope of their activities.⁴⁰ Currently, three main fact-checking organizations operate in Israel and were examined in the current study: FakeReporter (38 fact-checks), Bodkim (20 fact-checks), and Hamashrokit (affiliated with Globes, a financial newspaper). Hamashrokit is the only Israeli fact-checking organization that is a member of IFCN. The current study finds that Hamashrokit published only two war-related fact-checks during the Israel–Iran War, and even these were based on outside fact-checkers, and therefore were not included in the study. Another focal challenge is the lack of fact-checking organizations that target different minority groups in Israeli society, such as Haredi society, Arab society, or Russian speakers, although these groups account for a significant proportion of the general population. The existing fact-checking organizations also do not target these groups or publish fact-checks in their language. Furthermore, the fact-checking organizations and civil society in Israel face financial and political pressure that limits their ability to operate effectively.

40. Ram et al., 2025.

2. Content – Major Trends and Differences in Comparison to the Global Fact-Checking Field

This section presents the findings that emerged from the analysis of the content checked by Israeli fact-checking organizations.

2.1. Types of Disinformation in Israeli Fact-Checking Efforts

An analysis of the types of disinformation checked by the Israeli fact-checking organizations indicates that the most prevalent type of disinformation is false connection, which appeared in 66% of the checks, in contrast to the global trend, where the most prevalent type of disinformation is out of date. The second most prevalent type of disinformation checked by Israeli fact-checking organizations is out of date content (53%), and in third place in terms of prevalence — similar to the global trend — is out of place content (40%).

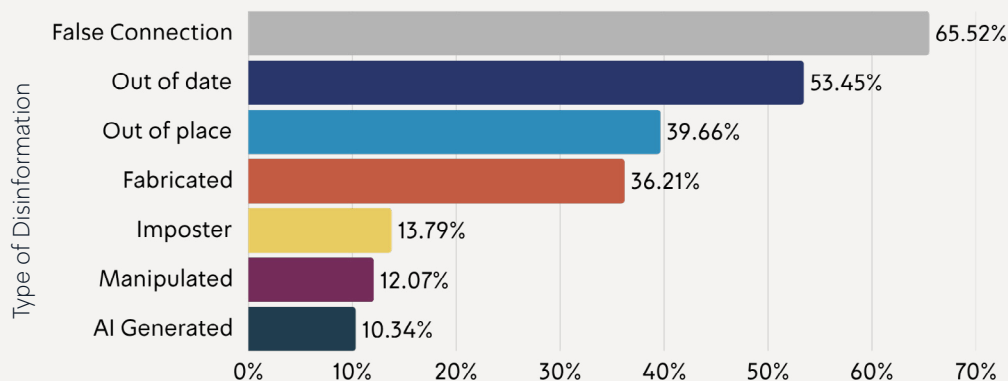


Figure 9. Disinformation Types Checked by Israeli Fact-Checking Organizations During the War

Here as well, many items included multiple types of decontextualization. Content that was both out of date and out of place was found in 22% of the cases of disinformation, compared to 50% found in the global fact-checks, and 79% of the cases contained one or more of the three types of decontextualization (out of date, out of place, false connection). As a result,

this is the largest type of disinformation in the Israeli fact-checks, similar to the situation in the global landscape. In contrast, fabrications appear in 36% of the Israeli fact-checks, accounting for a higher proportion compared to the global fact-checks (15%). In the following order of prevalence are imposter content (14%) and manipulated content (12%), and these types also account for a higher proportion of the Israeli fact-checked items compared to the global fact-checked items (2% and 5%, respectively).

It is interesting to see that AI-generated content was the rarest type of disinformation in the fact-checks performed by Israeli organizations — AI-generated content accounted for a mere 10% (6 checks) of the checked content by these organizations, compared to 20% of the global fact-checks. However, all the items in which AI-generated content was identified were checked by FakeReporter, and they constitute 16% of all the items checked by Israeli fact-checking organizations, close to the global proportion. In contrast, Bodkim did not fact-check AI-generated content and instead focused on fabricated claims and fabricated content, which constituted 65% of the items it checked, and most of these were published in or on behalf of traditional media and politicians.

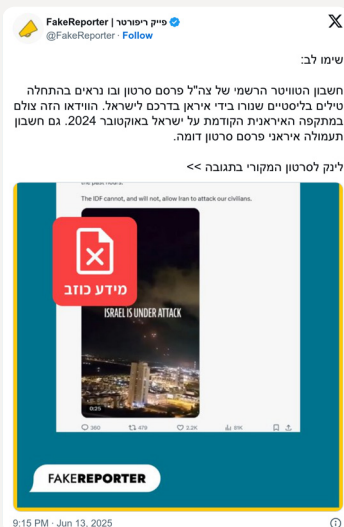


Image 20. Example of recycled content originating from the IDF Spokesperson regarding the Iranian missile attack against Israel in October 2024 (and not regarding the Israel–Iran War in 2025).⁴¹

41. FakeReporter@ (June 14, 2025). Note: The IDF's official Twitter account posted a clip showing, at the beginning of the clip, ballistic missiles fired by Iran on route to Israel [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/FakeReporter/status/1933634358784524773>

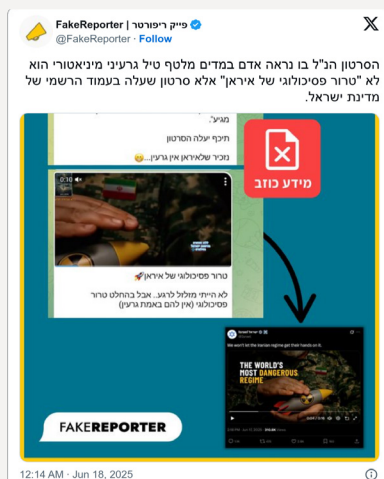


Image 21. An image that appeared on the State of Israel's official X account, containing an image of an Iranian nuclear bomb, was disseminated with the claim that it had been posted on official Iranian accounts as psychological terror against Israel.⁴²

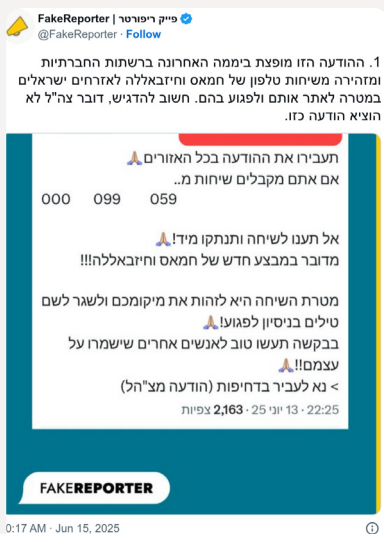


Image 22. Fabricated IDF announcements, designed to trigger panic.⁴³

42. FakeReporter@ (June 18, 2025). This video clip showing a man in uniform stroking a miniature nuclear missile is not "Iranian psychological terror" but rather a film... [Tweet] X. <https://x.com/FakeReporter/status/1935129042778251452>

43. FakeReporter@ (June 15, 2025). 1.This announcement was disseminated in the past day on social media and cautions against telephone calls from Hamas and Hezbollah to Israel citizens with the aim of locating them and causing them harm. [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/FakeReporter/status/1934193474837831844>



Image 23. Clip broadcast on Channel 12 alleging to have been filmed “a short while ago,” but in fact had been posted on social media three days earlier.⁴⁴

2.2. Formats of Disinformation Fact-Checked in Israel

Similarly to the global trend, video clips also accounted for the majority of fact-checked items in Israel (67%). Interestingly, in contrast to the global trend, textual information and images accounted for a larger share of the fact-checked items in Israel (31% and 16% respectively) compared to the global trend (3% and 13%, respectively). This difference is also due to Bodkim’s focus on this type of content.

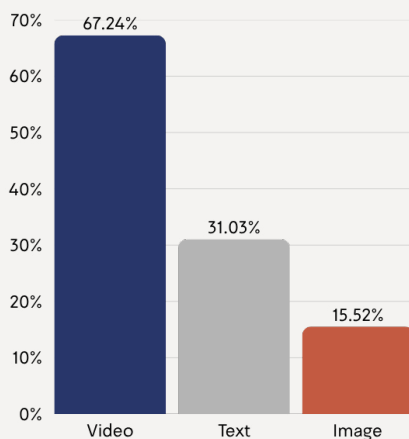


Image 10. Format of content checked by Israeli organizations

44. Bodkim [@bodkim2022] (June 22, 2025). The clip broadcast on Channel 12, with the caption “Iran a short while ago” is not a clip that was filmed today. The clip was disseminated on TikTok for example on... [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/bodkim2022/status/1936591851429023993>

Another important finding is that, as a result of Bodkim's focus on false information appearing in traditional media, 34% of the content that underwent fact-checking by Israeli organizations was fact-checked after they appeared in the media, compared to a mere 2% of the content fact-checked by global fact-checking organizations, most of which focused on content disseminated on social media.

2.3. Themes in Disinformation Fact-Checked in Israel

The main themes that emerged from an analysis of the fact-checks by Israeli organizations are similar to the themes that emerged from the global fact-checks, although their distribution differs slightly.⁴⁵

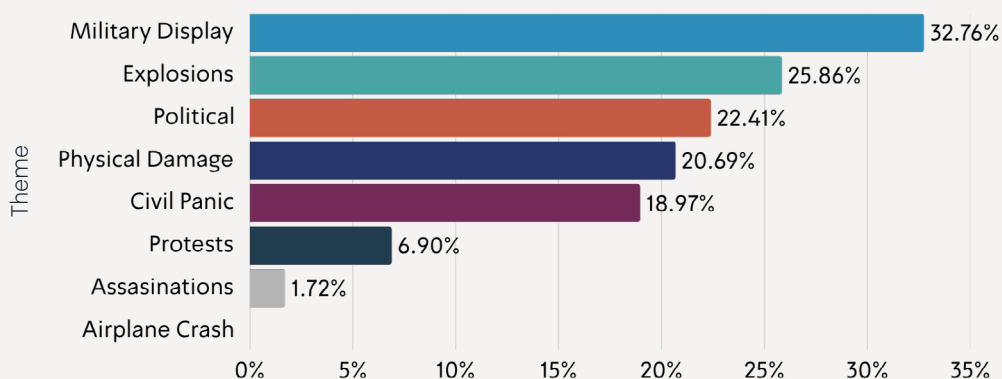


Figure 11. Distribution of themes in the Israeli fact-checked content

The main themes that characterize the content checked by Israel fact-checking organizations are related to displays of military force (33%) and explosions (26%). It is interesting to note that the theme of political issues was third in frequency, accounting for 22% of the checked content, compared

45. Each fact-check may represent multiple themes. Therefore the total number of theme counts exceeds the number of fact-checks.

to a mere 9% in the content checked by global fact-checking organizations. This content included a claim by an Iranian account that the UAE supplied emergency medical equipment to Israel, a post that attracted more than 1.5 million views, or a clip of former Israeli PM Naftali Bennet, whose biased editing creates the impression that he does not support the attack against Iran. Approximately one-fifth of the checked content (21%) was related to the theme of physical damage (in contrast to the global fact-checking field, where this theme accounted for a higher proportion of the content), and the remainder to civil panic (19%), protests (7%), and assassinations (2%).

2.4, Motivation for Creating and Disseminating the Content Fact-Checked in Israel

An unusual and interesting finding emerged with respect to the motivation for creating and disseminating the false content that was checked by the Israeli organizations: In contrast to the trend in global fact-checking, Israeli fact-checking organizations focused mainly on false content that might serve Israeli interests (57%, compared to 24% in global checks) and relatively few items that might serve Iranian interests (34%, compared to 72% in global checks).

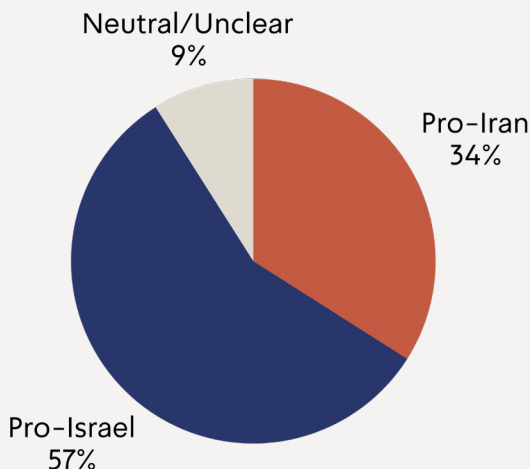


Figure12. Fact-Checked Content by Motivation for Dissemination

C. Fact-Checking Motives – Political Bias or Loyalty to the Facts?

The interesting differences in the motivation of Israeli and global fact-checking organizations in selecting the content for fact-checking raise the question of whether the Hebrew-language content selected for fact-checking reflects biases in the selection of the materials for fact-checking. We therefore classified the contents checked by the fact-checking organizations by the motives for creating and disseminating each item. Findings show that, other than the tendency of Israeli organizations to fact-check disinformation that might favor Israel, no biases were evident, and the distribution of underlying motives for selecting the fact-checked content is relatively similar across all fact-checking organizations.

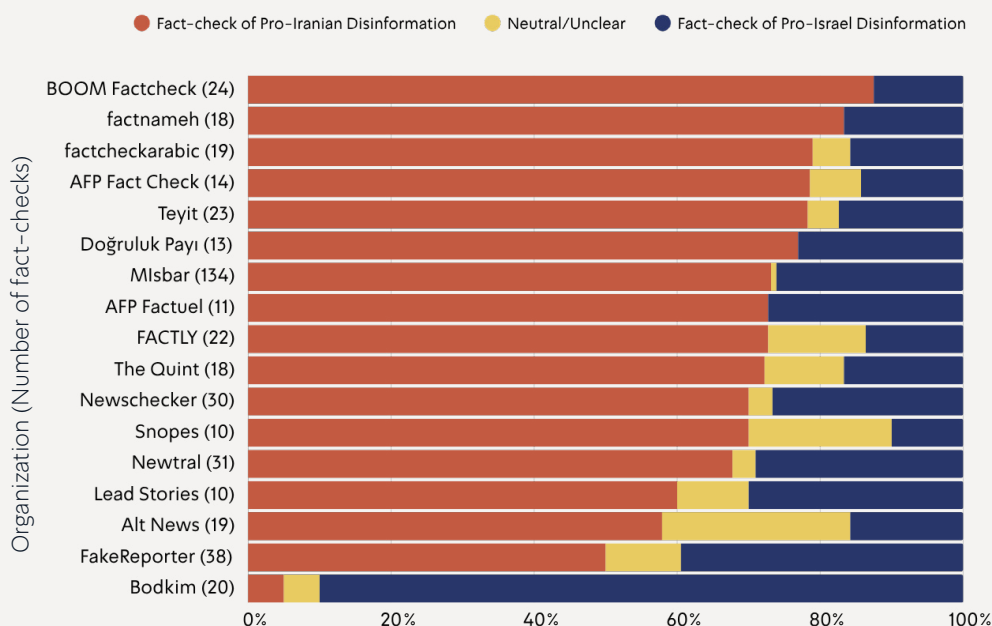


Figure 13. Fact-Checked Content by Motivation for Dissemination

We also analyzed the motives for creating and disseminating the content by the language of the fact-check report, as language may be an indication of the report's target audience and the audience that has access to the report.⁴⁶

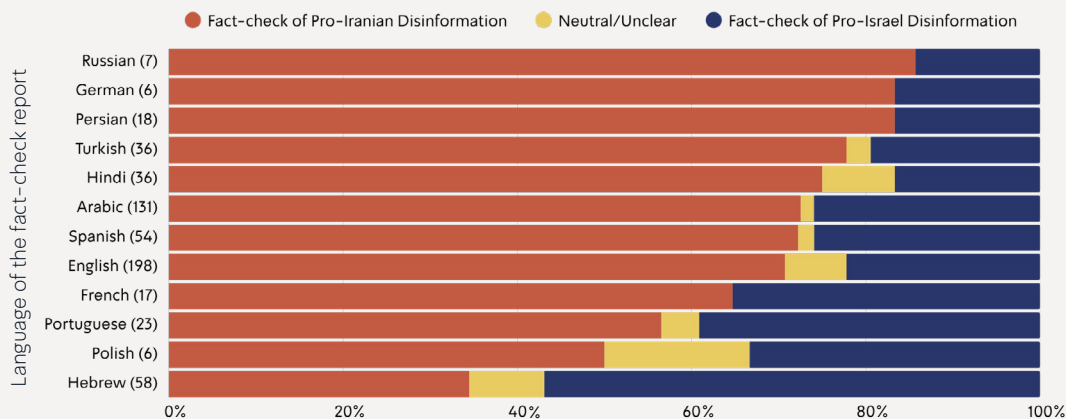


Figure 14. Fact-Checked Content by Motivation for Dissemination

This comparison does not yield exceptional findings regarding differences in fact-checking motivation by fact-check language of publication, but it does reveal an interesting similarity between fact-checking in Hebrew and in Farsi: Fact-checks in Hebrew largely addressed disinformation that might serve Israel, and fact-checks in Farsi largely addressed disinformation that might serve Iran. It is important to note that Factnameh, the single fact-checking organization that publishes its reports in Farsi, is registered in Canada and employs Farsi-speaking staff worldwide, and expresses a critical approach to the Iranian information environment and media channels.⁴⁷

46. We selected the language of the report rather than the fact-checking organization's country of registration or operation because several organizations publish their reports in languages that are not the country's official language. For example, an organization registered in Canada publishes reports in Farsi. The Figure does not include Romanian or Japanese because only one fact-check was performed in each of these languages.

47. Factnameh (n.d.). About us. <https://factnameh.com/en/about>

Discussion

The Global and Israeli Fact-Checking Field during the Israel–Iran War

Based on the main findings of the current study, we can say that the fact-checking field that monitored and checked war-related content that was disseminated on social media was broad and diverse in terms of the number of countries and languages represented by the examined fact-checking organizations. The large number of actors and the wide range of languages that were involved in war-related fact-checking reveal **the global nature of this war and the extensive attention that it attracted, both among the fact-checking organizations and among their local audiences.** We can also assume that the false and manipulated content was disseminated in the local language of each target country, which stresses the **global dynamics and borderless nature of disinformation in wartime.** Although the international public, the media, and academic discourse focus on western organizations and experts, especially from Western Europe and North America, the current study highlights that extensive fact-checking activities take place in other areas of the world, and it is necessary to incorporate a broader range of fact-checking organizations in the international discourse in order to reflect the needs and biases of various communities. An analysis of the findings shows, for example, India's prominent role as an important and particularly active actor in the fact-checking field: Eight Indian fact-checking organizations examined publications related to the Israel–Iran War. Also notable is Misbar, a Jordan-based organization, which was the source of the largest number of fact-checks published during the war, according to the current study.

It is also interesting to note that **the study found no differences in bias or motivation underlying the selection of the content fact-checked by the various fact-checking organizations or the fact-check publication language.** In general, the majority of the checked content potentially favored Iranian interests or was designed to adversely affect Israeli interests. This prominent finding, based on a broad examination of diverse organizations, may indicate

the dominance of pro-Iranian (or anti-Israeli) entities involved in the creation and dissemination of false and manipulated content during the war, and may further attest to similar fact-checking policies and standards used by the organizations included in the current study. The prominent exceptions to this distribution of motives appear in the fact-checks published in Hebrew and Farsi: **Israeli fact-checking organizations focused mainly on disinformation that potentially serves Israeli interests**, while the organization that performs fact-checks in Farsi examined more items that potentially favor Iranian interests, compared to most of the organizations in the global fact-checking field. The difference between the fact-checks performed by organizations operating in Hebrew and Farsi and the other fact-checking organizations underlines the importance of local fact-checking organizations that function as critical gatekeepers that protect local network and information environment users against false content related to crises and war.

The features of the disinformation disseminated and fact-checked during the Israel-Iran War

The collection and analysis of the fact-checks performed by several tens of fact-checking organizations during the war allow us to gain insights and a better understanding of the information environment and dissemination of disinformation during the Israel-Iran War, and in contemporary wars in general. It is nonetheless important to stress that the analysis of the content was based on the fact-checks performed by these organizations, and it does not constitute a direct and representative analysis of the entire digital media field during the war.

A striking finding in this analysis is related to the breakdown of disinformation items by format. **The vast majority of the fact-checked content is visual - most of them in video format (84%)**, followed far behind by images (13%) and text (3%). Research has found that a high proportion of disinformation content to which social media users are exposed is visual items, also because social media algorithms prioritize video clips, which typically generate greater exposure and engagement compared to other types of content. The findings of the current study show a similar pattern in

the Israel–Iran War.⁴⁸ The fact-checks' focus on video clips and images attests to the strongly visual nature of war-related disinformation; Such content was clearly used to deceive viewers and exploit social media's prioritization of such content. Still, it is possible that this focus also reflects a bias on the part of the fact-checking organizations and their own preference to address video content, either because such content generates greater engagement and interest among their own target audiences and the media, compared to textual content, for example, or because visual items are easier to find and verify. It is also interesting to note that **no fact-checking work addressed claims made in live-stream videos on social media**: These are more difficult to monitor or verify in retrospect. In other words, if disinformation is disseminated through live broadcasts on social media platforms, this type of disinformation may slip under the fact-checkers' "radar."

With respect to an examination of the methods in which content deceives or constitutes disinformation, many cases used authentic content and documentation of past events that were deceptively disseminated out of their original context, such as the use in this conflict of documentation of Iranian missile attacks against Israel in 2024. Of the fact-checks examined here, 88% (470) contained content that was decontextualized in at least one dimension — out of date (76%), out of place (63%), or false connection (71%). This is a much higher proportion than other types of deception and disinformation identified by the fact-checking organizations. In other words, **the majority of disinformation content related to the war was based on genuine, authentic documentation and was not entirely fabricated**. They distorted genuine events by presenting them out of their original context. The checks of such deceptions were much more numerous than fact-checks of completely fabricated content, and the latter accounted for a relatively small proportion of the fact-checked performed by global organizations. One possible explanation for this finding speaks to the abilities and limitations of these fact-checking organizations: While technological tools such as reverse image searches make it easier to refute false information that is taken out of their place or out of date, refuting arguments and claims is much more

48. Yang, Y., Davis, T., & Hindman, M.D. (2023). Visual misinformation on Facebook. *Journal of Communication*, 73(4), 316–318. www.cmu.edu/ideas-social-cybersecurity/events/conference-archive/archive-conference-2021/conference-papers-2021/conference-2021-paper-8-visualmisinformation.pdf

complicated, as it requires other tools and in-depth research. It is also potentially complicated politically, as this type of fact-check addresses the content itself and not its features.

Another finding, both interesting and important, is that **20% of the fact-checks performed during the war addressed AI-generated disinformation.** This is the second most prevalent type of disinformation that was checked, following decontextualization, and is much more prevalent than manipulated content or content altered using simpler and older tools. Only 5% of the checked disinformation whose content was manipulated through biased editing or other traditional non-AI tools. In other words, **the use of AI tools to manipulate or create false visual content has become more prevalent than the use of older and simpler tools.** This situation may be the result of the increasing improvements in and availability of AI tools, and this finding is consistent with other publications on the information environment during the Israel–Iran War that claimed that AI-based disinformation was widely used in this conflict.⁴⁹

In any case, this is still a very small proportion of misinformation compared to disinformation based on decontextualization. These findings are consistent with previous studies that found that despite the media hype and public concern surrounding the use of AI tools to create false content in general, and specifically with respect to wars, elections, and crises — such as the use of AI to create deepfake content depicting politicians to influence public opinion — such uses have not become especially prevalent and the majority of false information remains grounded in genuine past events.⁵⁰ Despite the advances and availability of AI tools in recent years, the dissemination of recycled video clips and images of other events and sites is quicker and simpler than fabricating synthetic content, which still requires a degree of expertise and technical know-how. This finding should, however, be interpreted with caution because during the war, certain AI-generated materials, such as

49. EDMO, 2025; Murphy et al., 2025; Gault, M., & Maiberg, E. (2025, June 18). The AI slop fight between Iran and Israel. *404 Media*. www.404media.co/the-ai-slop-fight-between-iran-and-israel/

50. Brennan, J. S., Simon, F. M., & Nielsen, R. K. (2020). Beyond (mis)representation: Visuals in COVID-19 misinformation. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 26(1), 277–299. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220964780>; Hameleers, 2025

images of downed aircraft, became viral, and the high proportion of this type of disinformation in the fact-checked content may be the result of a decision by many global fact-checking organizations to address viral content. Moreover, it is also important to remember that it is methodologically easier to check and refute old or recycled content by identifying their past appearances than to refute edited or synthetic contents that may be of high technical quality, which undermines identification efforts. In other words, the large number of fact-checks of a specific type of disinformation content may reflect the dominance of this disinformation type in the disinformation field, but may also be related to fact-checkers' preferences and access to tools.

Viral Explosions and Ballistic Fakes

The features of the manipulated and false content disseminated and fact-checked during the war, which emerge from the current study, are consistent with the main themes identified in the data analysis, and attest to the uses made by the creators of such content to promote their interests. The current study found that **the majority of the fact-checked content reflected efforts to enhance manifestations of military force and displays of power damaging the enemy**, for example, by exaggerating or fabricating damage to physical infrastructure or displaying weapons and means of military force. The content rarely addressed diplomatic or political moves, alleged war crimes, or human tragedies and the personal toll of the war. This is in contrast to disinformation disseminated in other wars and conflicts, including the Israel-Hamas War, where each party sought to de-legitimize the enemy and condemn its immoral nature by emphasizing its responsibility for criminal actions and violations of human rights.⁵¹ It also emerged that AI was used in this war to enhance or create fake images of the destruction of physical infrastructure and to fabricate crashes of aircraft and pilots. In contrast to other wars, such as the war in Gaza, most of the content generated by AI tools in this war did not include images of people or human situations that appeal to viewers' emotions, but instead contained images of buildings, infrastructure, weapons, and explosions invoked to produce fear and anxiety.

51. Hameleers, 2025.

Reinforcing this insight is the finding of out of place disinformation, where the original sites of these items were not necessarily located in the Middle East. The majority of images were captured in China, the US, and Russia, and these appeared much more frequently than images of events in Syria, Gaza, and Lebanon. This finding aligns with the type of awareness and consciousness that characterized the Israel–Iran War and with the nature of the information that was disseminated during the war, and offered a blurred and distant view from afar of the results of the conflict.

Consequently, in the Israel–Iran War, disinformation was widely used to inflate the extent of the damage inflicted on the enemy and to magnify the relative strength of one combatant, rather than to highlight illegal, illegitimate, or immoral acts committed by the enemy with the aim of mobilizing pressure by the international community. These uses of disinformation in the Israel–Iran War differ from the effective, emotional nature of disinformation in other contexts, and are instead designed to exploit and heighten the “fog of war” in order to directly pressure citizens and to create misrepresentations of damage that exceeds official media reports. **We term this type of disinformation “ballistic disinformation” – visual content focused on inflating the destruction and damage inflicted on the enemy.** This type of disinformation contrasts with disinformation based on victimization, for example, whose aim is to present one combatant as the weak victim in the conflict, emphasize the other party’s role as a cruel and vicious war criminal, and heighten international criticism and pressure.

In summary, the uncertainty, and the censorship and restrictions imposed on media organizations in wartime encourage the creation of disinformation related to war damage and strikes against the enemy, which exploits citizens’ lack of knowledge and media restrictions in order to fuel civil panic and fears and increase the psychological pressure on the enemy’s homeland, because it is difficult to refute claims disseminated in social media in the absence of publicly available information posted by official sources or reliable media organizations. The results of the thematic analysis suggest that although false narratives surrounding a war may appear in a wide range of types and scope, the underlying motives and uses of the various types of disinformation are designed to achieve similar focused results.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Fact-Checking Field in Israel

The current study illustrates fact-checking organizations' significance, contribution, and role as specialists that are knowledgeable and experienced in the local field, but also illustrates the absence of Israeli fact-checking organizations in the global fact-checking field. The difference between the motives underlying the content checked by Israeli organizations and those underlying most of the content checked in the global field proves that **the Israeli fact-checking organizations are an important and critical actor in the Israeli information environment**. Their gatekeeping function in Israel's media and information environment is illustrated by the relatively high proportion of fact-checks of claims appearing in local media — 34% of all checks focused specifically on disinformation disseminated on social media, compared to only 2% of all the checks performed by the global organizations. Furthermore, in contrast to the global trend where political issues featured in only 9% of the checks, this theme featured in a considerable proportion (22%) of the checks performed in Israel, which suggests that Israeli fact-checking organizations focus on content that has a local impact or attracts local interest and on content that is relevant to domestic politics, politicians, and media.

It is, however, important to note that the war-related fact-checks included in the Fact-Check Explorer database did not include fact-checks published in Hebrew or on behalf of Israeli fact-checking organizations. This is because **the Israeli organizations do not use the tools or formats that international standards require when publishing fact-check results in the global arena**. This situation reflects the weakness and under-development of the fact-checking field in Israel. The whistle (Hamashrokit), the single organization that used formats and tools that met the international standard in the past, published few items and fact-checks about and during the war. The two fact-checking organizations included in the current study — FakeReporter and Bodkim — post mainly on X and other social media, promoting items in diverse local media outlets, but do not maintain an archive or database of their fact-checks that is accessible or can be easily searched by the public, journalists, investigators, and other interested parties.

This lack is especially striking with respect to Arabic materials. Although approximately one quarter of the global fact-checks in the current study were published in Arabic, none of these were performed by Israeli fact-checking organizations that might have contributed a local perspective and applied local knowledge in the fact-checking process. Although Arabs account for approximately 21% of Israel's population, Israeli fact-checking organizations do not make content in Arabic accessible and do not take into account the unique needs of this group. This finding highlights that local fact-checking organizations fail to address the needs of Arab society, and raises questions about the verified information sources available to this group. The inadequacy of the response to this need is further undermined by the already limited abilities of these organizations, their small number, and the increasing financial and political pressure they face.

Summary and Conclusion

The current study contributes to an understanding of the global and local fact-checking field and the patterns of disinformation dissemination during the Israel-Iran War in June 2025. The study was conducted against the backdrop of a continuing crisis in the global fact-checking and information environment, which suffers from financial and political pressures and challenges, declining public trust, changes in social media policies, and the declining status of fact-checking organizations. The main innovation of this study is the presentation of a global snapshot of the information environment during a local and regional conflict: Although this war occurred in the Middle East, the war-related disinformation that was created and the responses to it, engaged organizations and activists operating in diverse regions and languages around the world.

Alongside the unique contribution of the local fact-checking organizations to our understanding of the local context of disinformation, the study illustrates the weakness of the Israeli fact-checking field and stresses its need for support. The weaknesses of the field include a lack of local organizations affiliated with international platforms and databases; a lack of local fact-checking activities in Arabic; and a lack of systematic, accessible documentation and archiving of ongoing fact-checking efforts and publications. Although the local fact-checking organizations play a critical role, these limitations reduce their impact in the global arena.

In terms of content, the current study indicates that fact-checks focused on visual content, and especially video clips (84% of the fact-checks), with a striking absence of other formats, such as live social media broadcasts (livestreaming), audio, text, and fabricated or deceptive claims disseminated on traditional mainstream media. Another notable finding is the prevalence of what we call “ballistic disinformation — visual content designed to inflate or resonate physical damage and destruction in the enemy’s home front caused by missile and aircraft attacks, in contrast to emotional, victim-centered narratives that typically appeared in disinformation content in previous conflicts. This pattern exploits the public’s limited access to

information during a war in order to directly impact enemy consciousness and supplements actual military operations, in contrast to the use of moral claims that trigger external international pressure directed to the enemy. The current study also reveals the extent to which AI tools are used to fabricate content during the war: 20% of the fact-checks involved AI-generated content. AI-generated disinformation accounted for a relatively higher proportion of the fact-checked materials than more traditional methods of manipulation. Finally, findings show that fact-checking abilities and policies are largely a function of available tools and resources.

A key limitation of the current study stems from the reliance on content that was monitored and checked by the fact-checking organizations rather than a representative sample of all the deceptive items disseminated during the war. It is possible that more sophisticated content or content with limited dissemination was not checked and therefore not included in the current study. Furthermore, the methodology of the current study is based on the judgments, priorities, and resources of the fact-checking organizations, which currently operate under multiple constraints and pressure and therefore it is important to integrate the findings of the current study and compare them with complementary methodologies and additional perspectives on the disinformation environment during the war. It would also be interesting to compare the findings of the current study to similar and corresponding studies on the patterns and types of use of disinformation in other conflicts and regions around the world, and the fact-checking of this content.

Despite its limitations, this snapshot of visual contents disseminated during the war — either decontextualized contents or AI-generated contents — stresses the importance of fact-checking and real time social media moderation. The majority of the content included in the current study was disseminated on social media and was designed to inflict psychological damage and trigger panic and confusion among civilians during the war. The diverse types of disinformation in use stress the importance of the work of human experts and independent fact-checkers in identifying the original

context of the materials, and the need to integrate human fact-checkers in social media platform moderation efforts and supply chains.

The findings of the current study will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the threats of disinformation and influence operations against civilians on social media, and on the internet in general, during wars and armed conflicts, and of the measures needed to address them. For fact-finding organizations, the current study also reveals the limitations and blind spots of fact-checking efforts. For platforms, the study offers a current snapshot of the types and nature of the threats and challenges related to wartime disinformation, and stresses the importance of cooperation with professional fact-checkers; For policy makers, the study urges to improve the protection of civilians in the digital environment, especially during crisis and war.

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